

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
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State of Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development

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Department of Workforce Development Receives \$165,000 to Help Refugees in Milwaukee

Milwaukee – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman announced today that Wisconsin received \$165,000 in the form of two grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to continue refugee assistance programs in Milwaukee.

“We have been very aggressive in securing federal aid to help make sure that refugees do well in Wisconsin. Approximately 1,000 refugees have resettled in Milwaukee since early 2004, and we are pleased this additional funding is available to continue to help refugees transition into the community,” said Secretary Gassman.

A Preventive Health grant of \$100,000 will provide refugees in Milwaukee with full access to health screening and preventive health care services. Preventive health services are targeted primarily to refugees when they first arrive in the United States, although longer-term residents with complex educational or medical needs may also participate. The funding will help approximately 450 new arrivals from such countries as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Burma, Laos, Liberia, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, and Vietnam; and will supplement current refugee health screening and treatment services funded under Refugee Medical Assistance and Medicaid.

The services are provided locally by bilingual health educators at Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, and the International Institute. The multi-lingual health educators will provide orientations for all refugees on identifying and accessing health care system services to aid the refugee. In addition, local health educators and state staff will provide cultural competency training for health care providers working with the new refugee populations.

The second grant of \$65,000 will allow continuation of services to approximately 130 elderly refugees in Milwaukee. Such services include assistance in obtaining citizenship, interpretation assistance, and development of strategies to help all refugee populations integrate successfully into their local communities. Bilingual staff will provide a crucial connection between the older refugee population and services available to through local and state aging networks.

The Department of Workforce Development manages and oversees the refugee resettlement program which is designed to assist refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency and social self-reliance. Services are provided locally to refugees by partner agencies throughout the state which are responsible for comprehensive, bilingual, and bicultural employment services. Supportive services may include health screenings, English as a Second Language training, and family-focused case management. Employment services may include assessment, vocational training, job application support, job referral, job retention, and job upgrading.

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Refugees seeking assistance can contact one of these local agencies:

For preventive health and elderly services:

Lutheran Social Services
647 W. Virginia St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
414-325-3096

For preventive health:

Catholic Charities
2057 S. 14th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53204
414-643-8570

International Institute
1110 N. Old World Third Street
Suite 420
Milwaukee, WI 53203
414-225-6220

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